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THE BLUE REPORT

A Report on Accomplishments and Status Update
on the Operations of the
Housing Authority of the City of Newark
under the Administration of
Dr. Daniel W. Blue, Jr., Executive Director

January 1989 - October 1990

OF THE CITY OF NEWARK

ORGANIZATIONAL/ADMINISTRATIVE INITIATIVES

Centralization of Contracts

The NHA contracting process has been centralized in the Contracts Division, which is charged with monitoring contract compliance and contractual performance. Previously, contracts were awarded by individual departments. The new system allows the Authority to better control and monitor the status of contracts.

Increased Rent Collection

The NHA has improved its overall rent collection system. The current rent collection rate is approximately 90 percent.

Riverfront Project

On October 23, 1989, the NHA announced plans for a \$400 million waterfront project with Capital Hill Investment Corp. of New York for a 3-million square foot riverfront redevelopment project that is scheduled to include offices, condominiums, a hotel, retail establishments and multilevel parking.



ATO Tour/City Council

The NHA staff and City Councilmen Henry Martinez, Gary Harris, George Branch, and Ralph T. Grant, Jr. inspected apartments at Hyatt Court that had been prepared by the Authority's Apartment Turnover Teams (ATOs) on Friday, February 9, 1990. The walking tour included visits to several apartments that have been occupied by families from the NHA waiting list.

NHA Tour/HUD Officials

Top HUD officials Anthony Villano, Theodore Britton, Joseph Lynch and Quana Johnson visited the NHA on March 1, 1990 to tour and inspect NHA operations. The HUD executives, along with Dr. Blue and NHA staff visited the Mini Police Precinct at Stella Wright Homes, Columbus Homes, Broadway Village and Stephen Crane Village.

Law Enforcement Strategy Seminar

NHA officials held a meeting with area law enforcement officials to discuss the problems of crime in public housing on March 12, 1990. One of the outcomes of the session was the consensus to form steering committees to address specific problem areas and to determine the appropriate responses. Present at the meeting were representatives from the Essex County Sheriff's Office, the Newark Police Department, Rutgers University Police and the Essex County Prosecutor's Office.

Operation Clean Sweep Training

Chairman Zimmerman Smith, Dr. Blue and several staff members visited the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) May 9-10, 1990 to learn more about its Operation Clean Sweep Program and to tour CHA sites that have been secured. The program is designed to eliminate drug activity and related crime through the use of stringent security measures, rehabilitating and renting vacant apartments, and evicting undesirable and illegal residents.

Residents/Employees Recognition Program

The NHA Employee and Resident Recognition Program was held on May 10, 1990 at the Quality Inn, Newark. The selection of residents for recognition was based on outstanding community service. The selection of employees was based on outstanding work performance. Over 200 employees and residents attended the affair.

ORGANIZATIONAL/ADMINISTRATIVE INITIATIVES

(Continued)



Mini Retreat

The NHA held a Commission Retreat on June 22-23, 1990, at the Newark Airport Marriott. The retreat provided an opportunity for NHA Commissioners Zimoroff, Smith, Lyell, Robinson, Chanté Molinari, and Gloria Cartwright to learn more about the focus and direction of the NHA. In addition to presentations provided by NHA departments, the program also included a presentation on team building by Joseph Albanese, a trainer for the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO), and remarks by Gordon Casanough, Esq., and HUD representatives Theodore Brittan, Jr. and Julie Fagan.

Networking with City Powers

Assistant Executive Director Benjamin Bell discussed the merits of a collaborative venture between the City of Newark, the Newark Board of Education and the NHA with staff from the Office of Affirmative Action and Counselman Doris Bradley at a meeting on June 13, 1990. The project, Urban Youth Corps Expansion Program, will involve hundreds of 16 to 21 year old men and women in educational and work programs with the purpose of future vocational training and employment.

New Daycare Center

On June 22, 1990, NHA officials visited the Friendly Field Neighborhood Center, located at Hayes Homes, to meet with its Board of Directors and to reaffirm the NHA's commitment to provide the necessary resources to insure the complete renovation of the Center. The visit also included a tour of the Center, which will provide day care and after-school programs for the community.

Blue appointed to National HUD Drug Crisis Team

Dr. Blue was selected to become a member of the Regional Drug Crisis Response Team by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. On July 23-28, 1990, Dr. Blue, the only executive director selected from the state of New Jersey, joined other executive directors from public housing authorities from throughout the nation in Miami, Florida to participate in "Operation Jumpstart" training. The HUD initiative is designed to assist public housing authorities in responding to emergency situations and in swiftly gaining control of developments in crisis. The intensive training program focused on conflict management, team building, cultural sensitivity and the study of various crisis response models.

Blue to Serve on Distressed Housing Commission

Dr. Blue has been appointed to serve as a member of a newly created, 18-member National Commission on Severely Distressed Public Housing by the Public Housing Authorities Directors Association (PHADA). All 18 nominees required the approval of Congressional staff. The body will identify housing projects suffering from severe distress and assist a national plan and strategy aimed at eliminating distressed housing projects by the year 2000. Commission members also will be authorized to hold hearings and draft new rules and regulations.

Transfer of Employees to the Complexes

On August 9, 1990, the NHA reassigned 42 employees from the Authority's central offices to various public housing complexes throughout the city. The move is designed to improve residents' living conditions and strengthen NHA field operations through increased manpower. NHA Directors and key top-level staff persons conduct monthly inspections in the field and spend one day each month working at the various complexes.

ORGANIZATIONAL/ADMINISTRATIVE INITIATIVES

(Continued) . . .

Annual Employee Picnic

The NHA conducted its annual family picnic on Saturday, August 11, 1990. The purpose of the fun-filled event is to promote camaraderie and increase employee morale.

Minority Business Workshop

The NHA conducted a Minority and Women's Business Enterprise workshop on September 11, 1990, 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Newark Quality Inn. The program is designed to provide minority vendors and contractors with technical assistance, with a goal of improving their overall business management skills and knowledge of the competitive bidding process. Presenters included Walter Frye of Frye/Williams, certified public accountants; Pablo Rivera, fair housing opportunity specialist with HUD; and Jim Bao of the Newark Economic Development Center.

NAACP Youth Awards

On September 17, 1990, some 140 public housing youths received memberships into the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), on behalf of Dr. Blue in the NHA Boardroom. The memberships were donated to the youngsters to encourage and motivate them, broaden their exposure and provide opportunities to develop leadership skills.

NHA Scholarship Foundation Annual Awards

The NHA Scholarship Foundation held its third annual scholarship dinner, "A Salute to Excellence," on Friday, September 21 at the Marriott Airport Hotel. This year's six recipients were each awarded scholarships in the amount of \$2,000 to help offset college tuition and expenses. This year's recipients were Robin M. Moses of Stella Wright Homes, Ibn Samad Onque of Baxter Terrace, Nasir A. Ismail of New Horizons, Rosa J. Jimenez of Baxter Terrace, Erica Yarbrough of Seth Boyden Court and Ardin Way of Pennington Court.

Public Employees Charitable Campaign Record Breaker

NHA employees raised \$20,800 in the 1989/90 Public Employees Charitable Campaign breaking last year's record of \$12,000. Most NHA departments and divisions failed in with 100 percent participation.

Full-time Legal Department

The administration instituted a new policy to extend the work hours of the Legal Department to maximize the efficiency in litigating NHA cases.



HOUSING MANAGEMENT

ATO Teams

The ATO teams have consistently exceeded the mark to provide housing for over 800 families from the NHA waiting list. Since the ATO teams made their debut over a year ago, hundreds of vacant apartments at various public housing complexes throughout the city have been renovated and the newly rehabilitated units have been rented out to needy families. As of September 1990, the figure for the number of apartments renovated by the ATO teams was 1,515.

Operation Clean Sweep Training Program

The NHA received final training and briefing on Operation Clean Sweep by officials from the Chicago Housing Authority on July 31, 1990 at the Newark Airport Marriott Hotel.

Management Decentralization Program

The NHA instituted a pilot program that centers on the decentralization of management and maintenance at Baxter Terrace and Bradley Court, effective June 4, 1990. The utility of this management strategy is being explored in an effort to both improve and increase services to residents. If effective, this method will give more responsibility to managers at the site level, who will have increased responsibility and accountability of all aspects of management, including budgetary development. The outcome of the demonstration program will determine whether the program will be expanded to include all complexes.

Operation Clean Sweep

The NHA conducted its first in a series of "Operation Clean Sweep" activities at the Stella Wright Homes, Building #6, on Wednesday, August 22, 1990. The operation began at 7 a.m. with a staff orientation, led by Housing Management Director Denise Coleman. NHA staff, along with 30 Newark police officers assigned to the project, subsequently conducted apartment inspections to identify unauthorized persons, to determine the condition of the unit and to conduct emergency repairs. Photo identification cards were also issued to residents, ages 12 and over, to prevent unauthorized entry to the building and all common areas were secured. "Operation Clean Sweep" is a comprehensive drug elimination program designed to improve living conditions for residents living in public housing complexes.

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Kimi Gray Visit

Ms. Kimi Gray, chairperson of the Kahlworth Parkside Resident Management Corp. in Washington, D.C., brought her message of hope and inspiration to more than 300 public housing residents when she visited Stella Wright Homes and Stella Wright Homes on September 19, 1990. The NHA also hosted a reception at the Newark Public Library to welcome Ms. Gray to the NHA on September 18, 1990. The business community and various public officials also had the opportunity to hear Ms. Gray explain how she mobilized community and HUD support and transformed her public housing development into a model complex at a luncheon in her honor at the Vista Hotel. Ms. Gray has received national recognition for championing the cause of resident management and resident empowerment to promote better living conditions in public housing. The reception was made possible through a joint venture between the Midlantic National Bank and the Newark Public Library and the luncheon was supported by Prudential Insurance Company.

Closing of Columbus Homes

The NHA officially closed the last remaining occupied building at Columbus Homes and closed the entire complex on October 3, 1990, 35 years after the complex first opened.

Increased Services To Residents

The NHA hired night coordinators to coordinate maintenance activity outside of all NHA complexes to effectively respond to and address residents' needs and emergency maintenance services during evening hours.

Revised Occupancy Policy

The NHA Board of Commissioners revised the occupancy policy regarding administrative, occupancy and renters at all NHA complexes. In addition, a pet policy was established to control the animal population in NHA complexes.

Reduced Work Order Backlog for Residents

Over a nine-month period, the Department of Housing has worked to significantly reduce the backlog of work orders for residents' services.

GRANTS

The NHA has been awarded the following grants in the area of security/drug elimination, totaling \$2,476,640, since January 1, 1989.

1. Newark Drug-Free Housing Project. Funded by the State of New Jersey Department of Law and Public Safety in the amount of \$275,000. This is a one-year model program, targeted at NJ2-1, Seth Boyden Court, which provides a coordinated approach to drug elimination. It is being coordinated through a joint effort of the NHA and the Newark Police Department, and involves: (a) the assignment of 15 Newark Police Officers to patrol the site; (b) the cooperation of the Essex County Prosecutor's Office and the Greater Newark Coordinating Council to provide undercover and clean sweep operations at the site; (c) the development of law enforcement programs aimed at establishing positive relations with youth; and (d) the cooperation of the Essex County Prosecutor's Office in presenting "Defenders Against Drugs" programs at the local elementary schools. The program began July 1, 1990.

2. FFY 1989 Public Housing Drug Elimination Program. Funded by the U.S. Department of HUD in the amount of \$250,000. This pilot project is a comprehensive, multi-component program designed to eliminate drug activity and secure from unauthorized access three of the seven family high-rise buildings at Stella Wright Homes. The sweep operation of the first building occurred on August 22, 1990.

3. FFY 1990 Public Housing Drug Elimination Program. Funded by the U.S. Department of HUD in the amount of \$1,116,000. This project is a continuation and extension of the FFY 1989 PHODP, and includes a comprehensive, multi-component program designed to eliminate drug activity and secure from unauthorized access the remaining four buildings at Stella Wright Homes and the extension of the program to Walsh Homes.

4. Training Grant for NHA Security Bureau. Funded by the State of New Jersey Department of Community Affairs in the amount of \$40,000. The purpose of the grant is to provide for the training of unnamed NHA security personnel as Special Law Enforcement Officers at the Newark Police Academy and to pay for the purchase of their weapons.

5. Community Investigation Unit. Funded by the U.S. Department of HUD in the amount of \$331,340. The purpose of the grant is to provide for the salaries of Law Enforcement Officers who will comprise this new unit. They will address the problems of disruptive tenants and drug-related crime through the effective screening of new tenants, the investigation of problematic current tenants, and the education of both residents and managers regarding the problems caused by drug use and how to deal with them more effectively.

6. Tenant Security Awareness Program. Funded by the U.S. Department of HUD in the amount of \$277,500. The purpose of the program is to generate interest for and implement Tenant Security Patrol Programs at all NHA sites. The NHA, in conjunction with the Newark Police Department, will design and provide an intense training program that will take place in a retreat format. The program will include techniques aimed at crime prevention, observation and reporting, radio communication, legal restrictions, safety, leadership training, group skills building, and canvassing and organizing techniques.

7. Target-Hardening of Elderly Developments. Funded by the Essex County Division on Aging in the amount of \$187,000. The following security measures were implemented: (a) the installation of security doors with four-way locking mechanisms on the rear and side entrance doors of 25 elderly buildings; (b) the installation of five-foot high wrought iron fencing around 6 buildings at 2 elderly developments; and (c) the installation of security telephones in the lobbies of all 25 elderly buildings throughout the city, allowing residents direct access to the NHA Security Bureau dispatcher.



MODERNIZATION

In 1989, the NHA received the largest award in the state, \$18 million from HUD, to conduct modernization work at all NHA sites. Additionally, the NHA earmarked approximately \$7 million for asbestos removal and made it a top priority.

Work completed within the last 12 months includes:

- Electrical upgrading at Seth Boyden Court - \$1,500,000.
- Electrical upgrading at Kretschmer Homes - \$600,000.
- Installed smoke/fire alarm system at Kretschmer Homes - \$180,000.

Replaced or rehabilitated emergency fire pumps at Kretschmer Elderties, Seth Boyden Elderties, Baxter Elderly and Scudder Homes \$439,000.

\$2.2 million expended to complete facade restoration at Seth Boyden Elderties, Baxter Terrace Elderly and Stephen Crane Elderly.

Over \$3 million spent to rehabilitate elevators at Stella Wright Homes, Walsh Homes, Kretschmer Homes, Hayes Homes, Baxter Terrace Elderly and Stephen Crane Elderly.

Boiler room modernization at both Seth Boyden Elderly complexes and Stephen Crane Elderly complexes and Stephen Crane Elderly, N.J. 2-210 - \$3 million.

- Constructed a new day care center at Scudder Homes - \$580,000.
- Constructed a new day care center at Hayes Homes - \$500,000.
- Replaced roof at Scudder Homes, Building #6 - \$106,000.
- Replaced roof at Administrative Building - \$145,400.

Total Expenditure - Approximately \$12,650,000.

Contracts awarded during the last 12 months (work currently in progress) include the following:

- Fire Escapes/Second Means of Egress: Seth Boyden, Baxter Terrace, Hyatt Court, Felix Fold, Terrell Homes, Bradley Court - \$5.9 million.
- Fire Escapes/Second Means of Egress: Pennington Court - \$841,000.

Asbestos Abatement:

- Pennington Court - \$180,000. Terrell Homes - \$632,000.
- Walsh Homes - \$375,000. Hayes Homes Elderly - \$73,000.
- Electrical upgrade: Hyatt Court - \$1.4 million.
- Interior stair replacement: Pennington Court - \$233,000.
- Roof replacement: Kretschmer Homes, buildings #2 and #6 \$336,000.
- Elevator replacement: Kretschmer Homes, building #6 - \$209,400.
- Fire doors: Stella Wright - \$517,000.

Total Award Obligation: \$9.4 million

STATUS OF NHA CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

NJ 2-35B/South 12th Street:

This project originally consisted of 65 units to be built between South 12th and South 13th Streets. To date, 48 units have been constructed and occupied. As a result of the Court Settlement Agreement, the remaining 47 units. The tentative site approval has been granted and the Authority expects to receive final site approval from HUD soon.

NJ 2-39/Irvine Turner Blvd. & Bergen Street:

The NHA plans to construct 124 units on three sites on Irvine Turner Boulevard, Bergen Street and Muhammad Ali Avenue in the Central Ward. All necessary applications and documentation for site approval have been granted. Upon completion of further ongoing soil testing, the Authority will obtain final site approval and advertise for the developer's packet which has already been approved by HUD. The estimated time to start the actual construction for this project is June of 1991.

NJ 2-40/Chadwick Avenue:

The Authority has received and is reviewing bids on 100 units in the South Ward. Chadwick Avenue will house 86 units and 14 units will be built at the corner of Muhammad Ali Avenue and Outman Street. They will consist of three, four and five bedroom units. The NHA has received proposals for the project and a panel designated by the executive director is presently reviewing them. Construction of this project will start by April 1991 and it will be completed within a one-year period.

NJ 2-41/Elizabeth Valley/West Ward:

In the Elizabeth Valley and West Ward, the NHA will build 2184 units. All the information required including the Application for Tentative Site Approval was submitted to HUD in February 1990. The sites for this project are owned by the City of Newark which will be transferred to the Authority according to an ordinance approved by the City Council. The projected time to start construction of this project is July of 1991.

NJ 2-42/North Ward/West Ward:

The NHA is utilizing a different method with this proposal, where developers are asked to provide the land as well as construct the units. The project will consist of 184 units. Developers have been requested to submit proposals to build on land they control, with 40 percent in the West Ward and 60 percent in the North Ward. Upon the receipt of the proposals expected in late October, a developer will be selected to prepare construction documents and start construction.

As additional 1,118 units will be given funding priority in FFY 1990 through 1992 to complete Columbus Homes replacement units.

1990 - 390 units
1991 - 372 units
1992 - 356 unit

RESIDENT INITIATIVES/PERSONNEL

Aids Awareness Workshops

The NHA formed a partnership with the American Red Cross to conduct series of Aids Awareness Workshops at various public housing complexes. The program was funded by a \$35,000 matching grant from the U.S. Center for Disease Control.

Thanksgiving Turkey for Residents

The NHA presented 600 ready public housing families with a \$20 voucher to be used toward the purchase of a Thanksgiving Turkey in November 1990.

Resident Awareness Programs

The NHA launched the Resident Awareness Program at various complexes. The meetings are the township of the residents who wish to make positive changes at their developments.

NHA officials conducted resident awareness meetings at Stephen Chase Elderly, Saxton Terrace, Kitchener Elderly and Bradley Court to identify areas of concern and to discuss methods to improve the quality of life for residents.

Staff/Resident Caucuses

NHA staff participated in the General Tenants Meeting of the North Haven Tenants Association to discuss resident concerns and solutions to improve the living conditions at the complex. NHA officials also met with Hayes Homes residents of Synnott Baptist Church on June 4, 1990 to advise them of the measures being implemented to improve the living environment for residents.

Commissioners meet Regularly with NTC

On June 8, 1990, the NHA Board of Commissioners and NHA staff conducted their Quarterly Meeting with the North Haven Tenants Council (NTC). Discussion focused on general and specific topics of interest to the NTC leadership, including security and adding grandfathers and foster children to the lease.

NTC Awarded \$200,000 Services Contract

The NHA awarded a \$200,000 contract to the North Haven Tenants Council. The contract which allows public housing residents to perform cleanup services before and after the NHA's Apartment Turnover (ATD) Teams have rehabilitated vacant apartments officially, took effect August 6, 1990. Ten residents have facilitated apartment occupancy at Stella Knight Homes, Hayes Homes, Kitchener Homes and Seth Boyden.

PERSONNEL

In accordance with the Executive Director's instructions, employees are being offered various types of training. To date, over 300 NHA personnel have received training in leadership and stress, effective supervision, management skills, communications systems, problem solving and managing technical problems. Housing Managers and Project Maintenance superintendents were also given specific training in the management of occupational hazards and the "right to know" legislation at project sites. The activity was conducted in collaboration with the state Department of Labor.

Conducted a series of workshops on the Drug-Free Workplace in cooperation with the state Attorney General's office. A representative conducted Drug Awareness sessions for staff and housing residents. Nearly 800 employees and over 400 residents at Kitchener Elderly, Baxter Elderly, Seth Boyden Elderly, Stella Knight Homes and Walsh Homes have participated in the training sessions.

The state Department of Personnel conducted a five-day training session on succession for executive and management personnel between September 5 and October 11, 1990. Among the 26 trainees were the Executive Director, three directors, chiefs, managers and superintendents.

Conducted workshops for the NHA supervisory staff. Managers and superintendents were given an overview by Personnel staff on procedures for requesting leave of absence and use of earned sick time.

Identified employees with chronic absenteeism as part of an Authority-wide effort to implement policies designed to eliminate this employee problem.

Conducted training workshops on employees "Right to Know" about hazards in the workplace.

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